LHC closes case as Punjab restores e-bus contract

• Justice Jawad deems petition infructuous as impugned order had already been rescinded • Punjab govt tells court the competent authority had reversed termination decision

By Malik Asad

RAWALPINDI: The Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi bench on Monday disposed of a constitutional petition challenging the termination of a contract for the procurement of electric buses after the Punjab government withdrew the impugned termination order.

Justice Jawad Hassan passed the order while hearing a petition filed by a contracting company against the Punjab government and other relevant departments. The petitioner had approached the court after the provincial authorities terminated a contract awarded for the supply and operation of electric buses under a public transport project.

At the outset of the hearing, counsel for the Punjab government informed the court that the competent authority had reviewed the matter and decided to withdraw the termination order. The law officer placed on record official documents and correspondence showing that the earlier termination notice had been formally rescinded.

In view of this development, Justice Jawad Hassan observed that the primary grievance raised by the petitioner no longer survived. The court noted that since the termination order – the subject matter of the petition – had already been withdrawn, the petition had become infructuous. Accordingly, the court disposed of the matter while leaving all legal questions open in accordance with law.

According to the petition, the contracting company had challenged the termination on the grounds that it was unlawful, arbitrary and issued in violation of the terms of the contract as well as the principles of natural justice. The petitioner contended that it had fulfilled its contractual obligations and that the termination was effected without lawful justification or an opportunity of being heard.

The petitioner further maintained that the termination caused serious financial loss and adversely affected its business reputation. It had requested the court to declare the termination illegal, restore the contract, and restrain the authorities from taking any coercive action against the company.

Court records show that the contract pertained to the procurement and deployment of electric buses as part of the Punjab government's initiative to introduce environmentally friendly and sustainable public transport. The project aimed to improve urban mobility while reducing carbon emissions through the use of electric vehicles. During earlier hearings, the LHC had sought replies from the Punjab government and the relevant departments and kept the matter pending to examine the legality of the termination.

QUETTA: Residents of Mariabad stage a demonstration against the prolonged suspension of gas in their area, outside the Sui Southern regional office.—PPI

Multiparty moot demands end to 'illegal' raids on Balochistan traders

Labels such actions 'economic strangulation' for people of the province

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: A multiparty conference (MPC) comprising political leaders, traders and civil society members strongly condemned night raids on shops and warehouses, warning that such measures amount to the economic strangulation of the people of Balochistan.

The conference, organised by the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and presided over by JUI Provincial Deputy Emir and Quetta District Emir Sheikh-ul-Hadith Maulana Abdul Rehman Rafiq, expressed serious concern over the conduct of the local administration, customs and police.

Participants alleged that officials were "looting the shops and warehouse in the darkness without taking the traders into confidence." The MPC termed these actions illegal and demanded their immediate cessation.

A declaration issued after the gathering stated that the closure of border crossings with neighbouring countries has halted all forms of trade. The statement warned the closure is rendering thousands jobless and pushing millions of families toward poverty.

The MPC demanded the immediate reopening of borders for legal trade and established safeguards to protect traders' property, stressing that no institution should be allowed to confiscate goods unlawfully.

The leaders alleged that only traders in Balochistan are subjected to such practices, calling the treatment "discriminatory and unjust".

Beyond trade issues, the conference expressed full solidarity with the Grand Alliance of government employees. The MPC endorsed the alliance's demands, including the implementation of agreed benefits such as the Disparity Reduction Allowance.

Leaders condemned the use of force against peaceful protesters, demanding the immediate release of detained employees and the reinstatement of those dismissed.

Participants also criticised severe gas and power load-shedding, acute water shortages and worsening law and order.

They called for the removal of joint Frontier Corps and police check posts established across Quetta.

The MPC further demanded relief for rickshaw drivers, the restoration of public transport, action against extortion in the gold trade, and the reversal of "no parking" decisions on commercial roads.

Additionally, the group called for the strict enforcement of respect for Ramadan laws and a special Ramadan relief package.

The leadership announced it would present a charter of demands to top provincial authorities, reserving the right to protest if the issues remain unresolved.

Bugti announces online recruitments for transparency

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: The Balochistan government will hire staff for at least 111 posts in the finance department through an online and transparent process to promote merit, said Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti in a social media post on Monday.

The CM said the initiative was part of his promise to end corruption and nepotism by strengthening transparency in the province.

"In this regard, online recruitment is being started for 111 government posts on a 100 per cent merit-based and paperless basis in the finance department," he said, while calling the move unprecedented. CM Bugti said that under the new recruitment system, an online test would be conducted so that candidates' qualifications and aptitude could be evaluated transparently. Successful candidates would be issued appointment letters within an hour to ensure merit-based appointments, he added.According to the CM, the online recruitment model will be extended to other government departments in a phased manner.

Sherry for steps to end gender gap in politics

ISLAMABAD: Calling women in politics agents of change, PPP Vice President Senator Sherry Rehman in her address at the House of Lords at the UK Forum on Cultural Diplomacy has urged global political systems to move beyond celebration 'to real structural change'.

While delivering a keynote address on 'Women in Politics', the senator said, women in politics represent three intertwined imperatives: to assess where we stand, to understand what women need from politics, and to shape collective agendas that transform societies.

Senator Sherry, who is also chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, noted that women held only 27.2pc of parliamentary seats worldwide, and just 29 countries have women as heads of state or government. At current trends, she warned, gender parity in political leadership is over 130 years away, (UN, 2025), describing this gap as "a stark indictment of the systems that shape public life."

She warned that as conflicts multiply and multilateralism weakens, rights protections were eroding across continents. "Rights and SDGs are no longer the global priority the world imagined for the 21st century."

—Bakhtawar Mian

JCP confirms additional judges

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following an accident by his underage son that killed two girls on the spot. IHC CJ Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Kayani appreciated that Justice Asif did not use his official position to influence the aggrieved family. Subsequently, Justice Kayani and Justice Munib Akhtar did not vote for him.

The commission, however, recommended, by majority, his confirmation, as well as that of Justice Khan and Justice Minhas, as IHC judges, after due consideration of the relevant data forms, antecedents, and evaluation of the material placed before it.

Also, the judicial commission also recommended, by consensus of the present members, the confirmation of Justice Najamuddin Mengal as a judge of the Balochistan High Court, while the confirmation of another additional judge, Justice Ayub Khan, was not approved by majority on the report of the antecedent committee.

Despite the strongly worded letter, the three additional IHC judges secured 13 votes each out of 17 votes. Two PTI members were absent from the JCP meeting, while two judges did not vote in their favour.

Justice Khan and Justice Minhas were appointed as additional judges in the IHC on Jan 17 last year. Justice Asif was also appointed the same day as an additional judge of the Balochistan High Court. However, he was later transferred from the BHC to the IHC.

According to the official data, Justice Minhas decided the highest number of cases in 2025. His single-bench disposal stood at 2,039; Justice Khan decided 1,841 cases in the single bench, while Justice Asif decided 1,338 cases.

CJ Dogar decided 1,236 cases, Justice Kayani 1,081, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri 706, Justice Babar Sattar 387, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan 347, Justice Arbab Mohammad Tahir 812, Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz 685, and Justice Khadim Soomro 529.

Meanwhile, the JCP met in different compositions to deliberate on key institutional and policy matters, besides making recommendations for the confirmation of ad-hoc judges. It will meet again on Tuesday to confirm the appointment of 12 SHC judges.

The commission also discussed the criteria for nominating judges of the constitutional benches of different high courts, policy decisions regarding the interview of candidates for the appointment of judges, and amendments to the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (Appointment of Judges) Rules 2024 for the inclusion of a provision for the appointment of judges of the FCC, as inserted by the 27th Amendment.

Following deliberations, the JCP authorised the committee headed by Justice Aamir Farooq to place recommendations before it regarding the procedure for interviews, and amendments to the rules, ensuring effective and transparent implementation of the constitutional framework.

TLP leaders' whereabouts

Continued from Page 1

organisation somewhere in the hilly areas," said a senior officer. Talking to *Dawn*, he rejected the alleged TLP statement, terming it a "false, funny and self-generated claim".

A source said a senior Punjab official was tasked with contacting federal authorities to verify the claim after the statement went viral on social media.

He said the provincial official conveyed to a senior official in Islamabad the Punjab police intent to arrest the "fleeing Rizvis" in multiple cases if they were in custody of any security agency, but the federal authorities told him the absconding TLP chief and his brother were not in the custody of any agency.

The source said the two brothers had assumed the status of "high-profile wanted criminals" in cases registered against them under serious and heinous offences, including anti-terrorism charges.

"So far, 44 FIRs have been registered against Saad and Anas in Sheikhupura and 11 in Lahore, in which they are nominated," he said, adding that the charges were of a grave nature.

Asked why the LEAs had failed to trace them, the official said the absconding TLP leaders were not using phones or other devices, making it difficult to track their location or hideouts.

"We have activated all systems across the country, and it has been confirmed by relevant state institutions that the TLP chief and his brother are still in Pakistan," he said, ruling out the possibility of their fleeing abroad.

He added that the Punjab police were actively pursuing the fugitives and had constituted several teams.

About the charges, the official said both had allegedly instigated TLP workers and hardcore activists to carry out attacks on law enforcement officials, besides damaging government vehicles and property.

An SHO lost his life, while dozens of others sustained injuries during repeated attacks by TLP workers in Lahore and Sheikhupura. He said the TLP chief and his brother had led the "Gaza March", launched from Lahore, where the party's headquarters are located, in October last year, with the stated aim of marching towards Islamabad.

Meanwhile, the FIA also moved swiftly, traced around 95 bank accounts allegedly operated by Saad Rizvi, and initiated investigations under money laundering charges, the official said.

Dawn tried to contact the spokesperson/representative of the banned TLP to verify the recent statement claiming that Saad and Anas were in the custody of state agencies. However, the representative neither answered the call nor responded to WhatsApp messages.

'Run for fun' held in Quetta

By Muhammad Akbar Notezai

QUETTA: The Balochistan Sports Department organised a 'Run for Fun' race in Quetta to promote healthy activities among the youth and revive sports culture in the province.

The race started on Airport Road and culminated at Almo Chowk. CM's Adviser on Sports and Youth Affairs Meena Majeed Baloch inaugurated the event, while Sports Secretary Durra Baloch also participated in the marathon to encourage young participants.

The run witnessed enthusiastic participation from the youth, athletes, sports officials, and people from all walks of life.

Addressing the participants, Meena Majeed Baloch said the provincial government was giving top priority to sports to make the youth healthy, active, and capable.

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- Oversee infrastructure, network, cloud, and application security, including secure configuration management and architecture reviews.
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7 policemen martyred in attacks

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and shifted the bodies and injured to nearby hospitals.

The martyred police personnel were identified as SHO Ishaq Ahmad Khan, Assistant Sub-Inspector Sher Aslam Khan, driver Abdul Majeed, Arshad Ali, Hazrat Ali, and Ehsanullah, who served as driver.

Police said the passer-by who was critically injured in the blast later succumbed to his injuries, raising the death toll to seven. The identity of the civilian victim could not be immediately ascertained.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi sought a report from senior officials regarding the attack on Tank police. He expressed deep condolences to the families of the martyrs and their colleagues.

Cop, his cousin martyred

Separately, an Elite Police Force constable was martyred alongside his cousin, in a gun attack in Paharpur tehsil of Dera Ismail Khan, police said.

According to the officials, the incident occurred on Kathgarh Road within the jurisdiction of Paharpur police station. Elite force constable Ismatullah and his cousin Amir died on the spot, while the attackers managed to flee.

Police reached the spot and shifted the bodies to a nearby hospital for medico-legal formalities.

Three cops injured in Lakki blast

Meanwhile, three policemen, including an SHO, were injured when an APC was targeted with an improvised explosive device on the Lakki-Darra Tang Section of the busy Bannu-Mianwali Road on Monday.

A police official said the bomb attack occurred near Jabbarkhel within the limits of Saddar police station and added that the injured policemen were out of danger.

According to a police statement, Lakki Marwat DPO Nazir Khan visited the site, assessed the situation, and ordered a search operation in the area.

The district police chief said that such cowardly acts could not lower the morale of the police force. He said that Lakki Marwat police were responding vigorously to every challenge and were ready to render any sacrifice for the protection of the public.

The DPO asserted that police were resolutely tackling Fitna al Khawarij and added that security had been further increased in the area.

Two terrorists killed in Lakki

Two terrorists were killed in a clash with security forces and police in the Kaichi Kamar area of Lakki Marwat district on Monday.

A police official confirmed the development and said that the security forces and police jointly launched an intelligence-based operation after receiving information about the presence of Fitna al Khawarij in the trans-river belt.

Fitna al Khawarij is the term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

"During the operation, an intense exchange of fire took place, resulting in the neutralisation of two terrorists", the official maintained.

The slain terrorists were identified as Sheryar alias Sheri and Irfan alias Paan. Police said they were wanted by law enforcement agencies in several terrorism-related cases, including attacks on law enforcement personnel, targeted killings, and IED blasts.

Two killed in Bannu IBO

In Bannu, the Counter-Terrorism Department, in coordination with local police, carried out an intelligence-based operation (IBO), which left two militants dead.

According to police, following an exchange of fire on Jhandokhel Road near Shagi Machankhel, two terrorists were found dead. They were identified as Sohail Khan alias Sangri and Ismail alias Usman.

Police said both were involved in attacks on Sheikh Landik and Fateh Khel police posts, in which eight police constables were injured. They were also involved in attacks on security forces' convoys and an IED attack on the under-construction Rescue 1122 building.

Attack foiled

In another incident, militants attacked the Nala Kasho police post. However, the attack was foiled due to timely retaliation by police personnel.

Bannu DPO Yasir Afridi later distributed awards among the personnel who repulsed the attack.